

# I

## NOT KNOWING SOMETHING (AS A GOOD START FOR CULTURAL PRODUCTION)

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*Andrew Paterson*

### *Not knowing something (as a good start for a workshop)*

This creative-proposal writing workshop involves guiding participants through a reflective and projective methodology for creative action and planning, beginning with the position of *not knowing something* and wishing to learn more about it.

Each step of the exercise process aims to elaborate upon what one wishes to learn; who knows about it; what activities may be generated by this urge; and who would be good company to do it with.

Different activities are imagined individually, considering the *what, when, where, how* questions, as well as considering support for the action and maybe funding sources.

Afterwards thoughts emerging from the process are shared, including details as desired. Learning together may be crucial, and common minds found.

You could argue this process is a common tool for project planning. Hopefully you have asked some of these questions to yourself or others before.

The method of starting from *not knowing something* has been successfully applied in the inter/trans-disciplinary cultural productions called *Alternative Economy Cultures and Herbologies/Foraging Networks* programmes, with were shared in Pixelache Helsinki Festival 2009 & 2010 respectively, ISEA2010 Ruhr, and other local cultural forums.

NOTES FROM 1ST WORKSHOP SESSION AT INTER-FORMAT SYMPOSIUM,  
NIDA ART COLONY:

Involve others in knowledge development, We try our best, It will be messy, Openness, It is impossible to plan everything, Idea-survival, Setting frameworks for involvement, Person can choose how to engage, Selecting out what is interesting from a field (of science), How to open up “this is my idea, how can you contribute?”

NOTES FROM 2ND WORKSHOP SESSION AT WORKSHOPOLOGY  
SYMPOSIUM, KIBLIX FESTIVAL:

Not yet become.

EXERCISE

*What are the goals:*

- \* To imagine new trans/inter/un- disciplinary activities
- \* To share strategies for project design based on not-being-expert
- \* To cross reference other people’s ideas for new collaborations
- \* To gain some experience in creative proposal writing exercises

*Social matrix:* eg. Individual work, collective discussion

*Timespan:* 60 mins minimum

*Preparation:* None needed except paper/notebook & writing/typing tool

*Introduction (5 mins):*

This will be a step by step creative proposal writing exercise, which are similar to creative writing prompt exercises where the workshop lead guides you through steps individually, but in the company of others, towards at least a prototype version of a new creative endeavour (such as a poem or short story). In this case it will hopefully new trans/inter/un- disciplinary cultural activity with others.

**Activity (30 mins)**

**This part is read out/audio files played as prompts to the workshop participants.**

Think about what you would like to learn, something that you currently know nothing about that could become your next project (maybe consider it creative research).

Now What

- \* What is the activity that relates to this thing that you don't know?
- \* What is motivating you to try to learn about it?
- \* Are you ready to take on the burden now to do the activity?

Now Who

- \* Who inspires/inspired you to do it? / Who are the people doing this activity that you know?
- \* Who might be people who are doing something similar? (for example in another field/discipline/occupation)

Now Where

- \* How might it relate to the where you live or where you come from?
- \* Where might you find other people who are doing this activity?
- \* Where might be good places to do it?

Now When

- \* When does this activity happen? (Context, Nature-, Social-)
- It is impossible to plan everything..

Past What

- \* What was done in the past?
- \* What are the historical connections of this activity?
- \* What has changed since?

Future What

- \* What is possible to do?
- \* What formats?
- \* What processes?
- \* What events?
- \* Within what field/discipline/?

### Future Who

- \* Who might be interested to get involved or take part? (groups or individuals)
- \* Who might know others who could get involved?
- \* Who might support this activity?
- \* Who might fund it? (also relates to Future How)
- \* Who might be interested to give (resources, materials, money) to the cause?
- \* Who are good hosts?

### Future Where

- \* Where are appropriate places to do this activity?
- \* Where are inappropriate places but would be good to try?

### Future How (could it be organised?)

- \* How can you involve others in development of knowledge/activity?
- \* How can people get involved a little bit, more than once, or regularly?
- \* How might the outcomes and outgoings be kept open for unexpected development?
- \* How might it get messy?

## ***Discussion (15 mins)***

**What do people want to learn?**

**Are there overlaps between group's different wishes?**

**Where are the gaps in group's proposals?**

*This Not Knowing Something exercise first took place as a workshop on a sunny terrace at the Inter-Format Symposium at Nida Art Colony, Lithuania, 4-6.5.2011.*

*It is presented again as a remote workshop contribution to 'Workshopology' Symposium of KIBLIX 2011 Festival in Maribor, Slovenia, 19-20.11.2011.*  
<http://www.kiblix.org/kiblix11/en/symposium.html>

*Gratitude to those who take part in the exercise and discussion, contributing to its development in our minds. Published under a Peer Production license:*  
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